

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



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Contact: Gregg W. Bortz
610-861-9734 or (cell) 202-222-5118

Congressman Dent votes to bolster laws protecting children against sexual predators

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) today voted for H.R. 3132 – the Children’s Safety Act of 2005, bipartisan comprehensive legislation that addresses the epidemic of violence and sexual abuse against children.

The bill encompasses many important reforms to strengthen the capacity of Federal, State and local justice systems to protect children from all forms of abuse and violence, and to protect all citizens from sexually violent criminals. It passed the House Wednesday by a vote of 371 to 52.

“As the father of three children, I believe this bill can give parents greater peace of mind knowing our children are better protected wherever they are,” Congressman Dent said. “Recent abductions in Idaho and Florida make it clear that this is a nationwide problem that merits a federal response. We make laws to protect kids, now let’s see they get enforced.”

There are about 550,000 convicted sex offenders in the United States. More than 100,000 sex offenders are “lost” and have failed to register in communities as required under current law. We do not know where they live, work or go to school.

The legislation supports a coordinated law enforcement approach that includes a broadening of the definition of such crimes, increased reporting requirements for known offenders, and increases in penalties for those who are noncompliant.

Highlights of the Children's Safety Act of 2005 include:

- Improving the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Program to ensure that sex offenders register, and keep current, where they reside, work, and attend school
- Improving verification systems for sex offender information by requiring monthly verification, sex offender in-person verification every six months, and regular notarized verification mailings
- Requiring internet public access to State websites
- Creating the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website to search for sex offender information in each community
- Expanding the definition of sex offenders to include juvenile sex offenders
- Requiring States to notify each other when sex offenders move from one State to another
- Expanding sex offenses covered by registration and notification requirements to include military, tribal, and foreign sex crimes, and increases duration of registration requirements to protect the public
- Expanding community notification requirements to include active efforts to inform law enforcement agencies, schools, public housing, social service agencies, and volunteer organizations in areas where sex offenders reside, work, or attend school
- Creating a new criminal penalty of mandatory minimum of 5 years to a maximum of 20 years for sex offenders who fail to comply with registration requirements
- Expanding law enforcement use of DNA to solve crimes
- Preventing and deterring violent crimes against children and sexual exploitation of children
- Protecting foster children from sexual abuse and exploitation and increasing criminal penalties against child sexual predators.

“Of any ‘war’ against crime, this one might be the most important,” Congressman Dent said.

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